

This is KPTZ FM 91.9 in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Rachel Perkins, bringing you news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* for Wednesday, March 4, 2026.

The food bank is serving more community members than ever before while supporting local food producers. Rebounding from struggles with untenable governance structures and operational friction, the Jefferson County Food Bank Association (JCFBA) overseeing food banks in Port Townsend, Brinnon, Tri-Area, and Quilcene now boasts a robust balance sheet, revised bylaws, and a focus on local sourcing amid rising community needs.

The JCFBA has navigated a period of leadership changes, volunteer departures and internal audits to enter a stable new phase marked by financial strength and expanded services. In late 2023, JCFBA was operated entirely by volunteers, with each food bank location being run largely independently from the others. The all-volunteer model faltered as demand surged, with the number of monthly households accessing services jumping from 2,700 in 2023 to 3,200 in early 2024.

Hiring the first executive director, Patricia Hennessey, in November 2023 triggered upheaval, including accusations of mismanagement, harassment, and bylaws violations from longtime volunteers. Recognizing the benefits of centralization, JCFBA revised bylaws to bar dual staff-board roles, eliminating conflicts in the old model. JCFBA Board Vice President Sonja Mathews noted that the changes enabled an executive director-led approach, transitioning from pure volunteer management to an employee model. Now, paid employees manage each of the four food bank sites, where volunteers still help organize and distribute food. Additional paid roles focus on centralizing operations, boosting efficiency as needs grow – now serving about 30% of Jefferson County residents, up significantly over two years, according to Board Treasurer John DiMaggio.

2025 marked a “strong year for donations,” DiMaggio said. This influx has proved critical as food insecurity has risen, enabling a nearly \$455,000 annual food purchase budget. More than half of JCFBA’s budget goes towards purchasing food, according to Board President Roland Faragher-Horwell.

JCFBA sources the majority of its food locally from vendors, growers’ networks, farms, gardens, and rescues from grocery stores and restaurants. Leadership plans for 2026 emphasize the theme of local procurement, including starter plants like basil and tomatoes for clients’ home’s gardens. Partnerships with the Food Bank Growers Network, Gleaners, local farms and food rescue efforts help sustain affordability, while cash reserves enable strategic buys.

JCFBA has two new pop-up locations, one at the New Life Christian Church on Sundays, and the other at Nourishing Beloved Community (NBC). NBC’s pop-up serves people of the global majority as well as queer and transgender folks, according to founder Oceana Sawyer. This transition mirrors the way many resilient nonprofits have adapted to post-pandemic surges, where professionalization unlocks grants and sustainability. JCFBA’s story – from 2024 rifts to audit-validated stability – positions it to better combat hunger in the county.

JCFBA is currently serving growing needs, accompanied by growing capacity. “The community has rallied around us in terms of donations to help. We now want to do more of these pop-ups, multiple pantry kinds of things,” said Faragher-Horwell. JCFBA will soon put out an annual report to the community, followed by a series of communications that Mathews says aim to “help people understand not only who we are, but who we work with, and what our plans are for the future.”

In a county facing rising food insecurity, JCFBA's new phase promises greater transparency, as well as reliable aid, blending volunteer heart with executive vision. You can learn more about the Jefferson County Food Bank Association at <https://www.jcfba.org>.

Reporting on this story by Scott France

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5 Tuesday through Thursday, partnering on Wednesday to bring you stories from jeffcobeacon.com. This is Rachel Perkins. Thanks for listening.